

Changes

By Marilyn Zelke Windau

Little minnows bit at my toes
when I was eleven:
baby alewives, whose parents were the
harvest
on sand shores of Lake Michigan.

There are spa treatments now.
Women pay dearly
to have baby minnows
chew dead skin from their toes.
For me it was free,
and it tickled.

Alewives are still present.
Quagga and zebra mussels have moved in,
emigrated from foreign ships.
Lake Michigan's waters are clearer now,

seined and sunlit,
much to the dismay of native species—
no cover, no hide,
less plankton to feed on.

Starlings shout their English tongue.
European Buckthorn branches out.
Phragmites Australis invade,
launch wetland takeovers.
East Asian jumping worms leap
at the chance to overwhelm.

We must protect and serve.
We must monitor changes.
We must actively respond.
We must say, "Do Not Revert."
Our waters and our lands are precious.



Photo by Ashley Lenda